

**Channel Tunnel Rail Link
London and Continental Railways
Oxford Wessex Archaeology Joint Venture**

**The post-Roman pottery from Westenhanger Castle,
Stanford, Kent (ARC WGC 98)**

by Lorraine Mephram

CTRL Specialist Report Series

2006

©London and Continental Railways

All rights including translation, reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior written permission of London and Continental Railways.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	3
2	METHODS OF ANALYSIS	3
3	DESCRIPTION OF ASSEMBLAGE	3
4	DISTRIBUTION.....	5
5	CHRONOLOGY.....	5
6	CONCLUSIONS.....	6
7	CATALOGUE OF ILLUSTRATED VESSELS	7
8	BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	7

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Fabric totals	3
------------------------------	---

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Westenhanger Castle - Medieval pottery, 1-3	
---	--

1 INTRODUCTION

A total of 656 sherds (5791 g) of post-Roman pottery was recovered from both stages of fieldwork at Westenhanger (CAT excavation: ARC WGC98; OA watching brief: ARC WSG99). Apart from one Late Saxon sherd, all of the pottery is of medieval date, with a potential date range of mid 11th to 14th century.

2 METHODS OF ANALYSIS

The pottery was recorded using a project-specific Access database. Fabric types were defined, using a x20 binocular microscope, following the Canterbury Archaeological Trust (CAT) type series for post-Roman pottery. A scheme-wide type series was created for rim, base and handle forms, and this was linked where possible to vessel forms whose definition followed nationally recommended nomenclature (MPRG 1998). Details of decoration, surface treatment, manufacture, use-wear and condition were also recorded. Quantification in all cases is by both number and weight of sherds; EVEs have not been considered appropriate for use with post-Roman assemblages.

3 DESCRIPTION OF ASSEMBLAGE

One Late Saxon (LS), ten early medieval (EM) and four medieval (M) fabrics were identified; totals by fabric type are given in Table 1. The medieval fabrics include early medieval (EM) medieval (M) and late medieval (LM) wares, all of which are local or regional wares with known or likely sources in Kent or East Sussex.

Table 1: Fabric totals

Fabric Code	Fabric Name	No. sherds	Weight (g)	Date range
LS1	Canterbury-type Late Saxon sandy ware	1	5	850–1050
EM.M5	Ashford-type (Potter's Corner) shelly-sandy ware	173	1258	1125–1250
EM1	Canterbury sandy ware	275	2447	1050–1225
EM2	Early Medieval shelly ware	2	33	1075–1225
EM31	?Kentish coarse sandy ware with moderate shell	3	6	1100–1200
EM32	?East Sussex flint and shell-tempered	87	1062	1150–1225
EM33	?East Sussex shell & flint-tempered coarse sandy ware	40	325	1075–1225
EM34	?East Sussex coarse sandy with sparse shell	1	2	1075–1125
EM41	Non-local moderate quartz sand with shell and flint temper	6	67	1050–1225
EM100	Miscellaneous Early Medieval ware	2	8	1050–1225
M1	Medieval Tyler Hill Ware	23	190	1225–1375
M10R	Wealden brown-buff sand ware (?Rye/Romney Marsh variety)	1	20	?1400–1550
M40A	Ashford/Wealden Sandy Ware with sparse chalk/shell	2	11	1175–1400
M40B	Ashford/Wealden Sandy Ware with very rare shell	40	357	1175–1400
	TOTAL	656	5791	

A single small body sherd, tentatively identified as Canterbury-type Late Saxon sandy ware, was found unstratified during the excavation.

Amongst the early medieval assemblage, the commonest fabric type is EM1, indicating that the primary source of supply to the site from *c* 1050 was Canterbury. These sandy wares appear to occur exclusively in plain, handmade jar forms, with rims everted and thickened or slightly beaded, or everted and flattened (Fig. 1, No. 1). No other diagnostic vessel forms could be identified.

Pottery from the Canterbury area was still reaching the site in the later 13th or early 14th century, in the form of Tyler Hill ware (M1), although all 23 sherds of this ware found on site came from a single feature (boundary ditch 453) and are likely to derive from a single vessel, a jug of uncertain profile with thumbled base.

However, from at least the early 12th century, the main source of supply shifted to the local area, when Ashford-type wares appear. The probable kiln site excavated at Potter's Corner (Grove and Warhurst 1952) is probably of early 13th century date, and was producing both shelly-sandy wares (equivalent to EM.M5) and sandy wares (M40A and M40B). While evidence from other sites on the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (eg Mersham: ARC MSH98) indicates that Ashford-type wares were in circulation prior to the life of the known kiln site, with origins perhaps as early as the late Saxon period, vessel forms present at Westenhanger in EM.M5 belong to the developed Ashford industry of the later 12th and early 13th century. These consist exclusively of jars with externally expanded, flattened rims, one finger-impressed, most of which came from a single feature (pit 253). One complete profile was recovered (Fig.1, No. 2).

Alongside the Canterbury and Ashford-type wares are smaller quantities of shelly (EM2, EM31), shelly/flint-tempered wares (EM32, EM33) and sandy/flint-tempered wares (EM34, EM41). These wares are as yet poorly understood, but are likely to have been produced at a number of different locations along the coast of Sussex and south Kent. They have a broad date range of late 11th to early 13th century. In this instance fabric EM32 occurs most frequently with Canterbury-type wares, while EM33 coincides with the Ashford-type wares (EM.M5 and M40A/M40B). Diagnostic forms at Westenhanger comprise jars with expanded or expanded and flattened rims in EM2, EM33 and EM32. There is also one complete jar profile in EM32, with a slightly beaded rim (Fig. 1, No. 3). An example of a later product of the same area is provided by a single sherd of the Rye/Romney Marsh variant of Wealden brown-buff sandy ware (M10R), with a probable 15th to early 16th century date range.

4 DISTRIBUTION

The overall distribution of medieval pottery is relatively sparse across the site. Of 45 features producing pottery, only ten yielded more than 20 sherds. The largest total came from pit 253 (121 sherds), mostly in Ashford-type wares (see above). Smaller assemblages came from pit 99 (61 sherds, largely Canterbury-type wares), pit 240 (55 sherds), ditch 448 (52 sherds), pit 130 (45 sherds), ditch 444 (34 sherds), ditch 49 (28 sherds), pit 55 (24 sherds), ditch 453 (23 sherds) and ditch 32 (21 sherds).

Most of the early medieval pottery came from features in the north-west corner of the site, which is the focus of densest activity at Westenhanger. Here, pottery from a series of parallel ditches and gullies (14, 20, 32, 445) aligned south-east to north-west, and from several pits (2, 6, 21, 55), is all of a similar character – largely Canterbury-type wares with small quantities of the sandy/flint-tempered fabric EM32, and single sherds of Ashford-type ware (EM.M5) from ditches 32 and 427 respectively. No pottery was recovered from any of the three structures (3, 4 and 5), which are presumed to be of early medieval date on stratigraphic grounds.

Cutting through these early medieval features are a series of ditches aligned south-west to north-east (443, 444, 447), or forming part of enclosure boundaries (440, 448), which produced, as well as Canterbury-type wares which may be residual here, Ashford-type wares (EM.M5 and M40A/M40B) and the shelly/flint-tempered ware EM33.

Later medieval Tyler Hill wares are confined to a single ditch (453) to the east of the main area of activity.

5 CHRONOLOGY

The range of fabrics and forms identified at Westenhanger suggests a potential date range for activity on the site from at least the mid 11th century to the 14th century; a single sherd of Late Saxon pottery is a tantalising hint of earlier activity here.

A potential date range of mid 11th century to late 12th century (*c* 1050-1175) can be proposed for the early medieval structures and associated ditches and pits. Although Ashford-type ware EM.M5 (dated 1175-1300) is almost completely absent from these features, the sandy/flint-tempered fabric EM32 (dated 1050-1225) is present in small quantities, so it may be that an emphasis on the later part of the proposed date range could be suggested, perhaps within the 12th century. The suggestion that this phase was relatively short-lived might be supported by the small quantities of pottery involved (less than 100 sherds from features of this phase).

The later ditches were only slightly more productive (122 sherds). Sherds of EM.M5 and EM1 are still present, but the appearance of the later Ashford-type wares (M40A and

M40B, dated 1175-1400) in ditches 440, 443 and 444 provides a *terminus post quem* for this phase. There is, however, nothing here which need be later than 13th century. The only definite evidence for later medieval activity comprises the sherds of Tyler Hill ware from ditch 453. Since these sherds may represent a single glazed jug (of later 13th or early 14th century date), it can be concluded that activity on the site was only sporadic at this period. The single sherd of later medieval Wealden brown-buff sandy ware (M10R) was not well stratified.

6 CONCLUSIONS

The pottery assemblage from Westenhanger has been used to propose date ranges for the three phases of medieval activity on the site. Quantities of pottery suggest that all three phases could have been relatively short-lived, or could have involved only sporadic activity on the site. Sherds in the ditches of the second phase (?late 12th to 13th century) could have been incorporated during manuring – the bulk of the pottery from this phase comes from a single pit (253).

Changes in sources of supply have been highlighted: wares from the Canterbury area were supplemented and largely superseded by Ashford-type wares during the 12th century, while smaller, probably local industries supplied sandy/flint-tempered and shelly/flint-tempered wares throughout. In this respect the assemblage from Westenhanger provides a useful contrast with larger assemblages from the Ashford area but located further north on the route, such as Mersham and Parsonage Farm.

Given the quantities of pottery involved, any conclusions regarding the relative status of the site must remain tentative, but the paucity of glazed wares may be noted; the emphasis here is definitely on utilitarian wares, at least in the first two phases.

7 CATALOGUE OF ILLUSTRATED VESSELS

Figure 1

1. Jar rim, fabric EM1, PRN (Pottery Record Number) AE-78, context 123, pit 99 (unphased).
2. Jar profile, fabric EM.M5, PRN AE-104, context 254, pit 253 (unphased).
3. Jar profile, fabric EM32, PRN AE-84, context 238, pit 240 (unphased).

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Grove, L R A, and Warhurst, A, 1952 A thirteenth century kiln at Ashford, *Archaeol Cantiana* **65**, 183-7

MPRG 1998 *A Guide to the Classification of Medieval Ceramic Forms*, Medieval Pottery Research Group Occas Paper **1**